

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0909

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

USINT HAVANA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

ALL USCONS MEXICO POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MEXICO 10020

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, PEPR, BU, UR, MX

SUBJECT: LOPEZ PORTILLO VISIT TO USSR AND BULGARIA--A
MEXICAN PERSPECTIVE

REF: LENINGRAD 1549 (NOTAL), MOSCOW 11882 (NOTAL),
MOSCOW 12352 (NOTAL), MOSCOW 13051 (NOTAL), SOPHIA 1074

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO'S TRIP TO THE SOVIET UNION/BULGARIA WAS FROM THE MEXICAN PERSPECTIVE A POLITICAL SUCCESS BOTH IN TERMS OF ITS DOMESTIC RAMIFICATIONS AND MEXICO'S PRINCIPAL FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVE OF OBTAINING SOVIET ADHERENCE TO PROTOCOL II OF TLATELOLCO TREATY. DESPITE MINOR GRUMBLING ABOUT COST AND SIZE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL RETINUE, THE VISIT WAS WELL RECEIVED ACROSS THE MEXICAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM AND ENHANCED THE GOM'S STANDING WITH DISSIDENT GROUPS ON THE LEFT, WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS ENCOURAGING TO ACT WITHIN THE ESTABLISHED
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POLITICAL SYSTEM. ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY'S FOREIGN SECRETARIAT CONTACT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VISIT, NO SIGNIFICANT AGREEMENTS WERE REACHED WITH THE SOVIETS, AND THE BULGARIAN VISIT WAS MAINLY FOCUSED ON ASSIMILATING AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGY POTENTIALLY HELPFUL IN RAISING PRODUCTION LEVELS IN MEXICO. OVERALL THE VISIT APPEARS TO HAVE FURTHER STRENGTHENED

JLP'S IMAGE AS A SERIOUS AND EFFECTIVE STATESMAN PRAGMATICALLY PURSUING MEXICAN NATIONAL INTERESTS AT HOME AND ABROAD. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JUNE 13 EMBOFFS MET INFORMALLY WITH FONSEC DIRECTOR-IN-CHIEF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, AMBASSADOR MANUEL BARTLETT, WHO PLAYED MAJOR ROLE IN ORGANIZATION OF MEXICAN PRESIDENT'S RECENT VISIT TO USSR/BULGARIA (REFTELS).

3. USSR--BARTLETT CHARACTERIZED TRIP TO SOVIET UNION AS PRIMARILY POLITICAL IN NATURE, WITH SOVIET ADHERENCE TO PROTOCOL II OF TLATELOLCO TREATY AND RELATED QUESTIONS OF DISARMAMENT AS MOST IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS FROM GOM'S POINT OF VIEW. ACCORDING TO BARTLETT, ONLY AGREEMENTS REACHED IN ADDITION TO TLATELOLCO WERE SIGNATURE OF CONSULAR CONVENTION--WHICH HAS BEEN CONTEMPLATED FOR MORE THAN TEN YEARS--AND AGREEMENT ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE PERIOD 1978-79. BARTLETT SAID THE CONSULAR CONVENTION HAD BEEN CAREFULLY NEGOTIATED AND WOULD NOT RESULT IN BLOSSOMING OF SOVIET CONSULAR POSTS IN MEXICO WHICH HE RECOGNIZED WOULD BE MATTER OF CONCERN TO USG. AS FOR AGREEMENT ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, HE DID NOT KNOW DETAILS BUT THOUGHT THAT IT WAS BASICALLY ROUTINE IN NATURE AND NOT VERY DIFFERENT FROM EARLIER MEXICAN-SOVIET AGREEMENT IN THIS AREA.

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4. IN GENERAL TERMS, BARTLETT SAID THAT THE VISIT WAS CORDIAL AND FREE OF FRICTIONS WHICH CHARACTERIZED EARLIER ECHEVERRIA VISIT TO MOSCOW. ELABORATING ON ATMOSPHERICS, HE SAID THAT SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES WERE EXTREMELY WELL ORGANIZED, WELL PREPARED AND SKILLFUL NEGOTIATORS WHO, RELYING PRINCIPALLY ON PERSUASION RATHER THAN ANY EFFORT TO EXERT PRESSURE, PRESSED DIPLOMATICALLY TO INCLUDE SOVIET POSITIONS IN JOINT COMMUNIQUE AND EXTRACT MAXIMUM MEXICAN COMMITMENTS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND EXPERIENCE OF SOVIET OFFICIALS IN LATIN AMERICAN DIVISION WHO COMPLETELY FLUENT IN SPANISH AND DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLE KNOWLEDGE OF MEXICO AND LATIN AMERICA. WHILE VISIT TO MOSCOW WAS QUITE FORMAL FROM PROTOCOL STANDPOINT, THIS IN NO WAY DETRACTED FROM COLLABORATIVE ATMOSPHERE OR USEFULNESS OF DIPLOMATIC DIALOGUE.

5. FROM FOREIGN POLICY POINT OF VIEW, BARTLETT SAID THAT SOVIET SIGNATURE OF PROTOCOL II WAS CLEARLY PRINCIPAL MEXICAN OBJECTIVE AND RESULT OF JLP VISIT. HE SAID THAT GOM, IN CONVERSATIONS WITH USSR AMBASSADOR IN MEXICO, HAD BEGUN PRESSURING SOVIETS THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO VISIT, BUT

BARTLETT WAS CANDID IN RECOGNIZING THAT U.S. EFFORTS WITH SOVIETS HAD PROBABLY, TOGETHER WITH PENDING VISIT OF MEXICAN PRESIDENT, BEEN KEY FACTOR IN EVENTUAL SOVIET DECISION TO SIGN PROTOCOL II. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT DURING BREZHNEV'S SPEECH TO KOMSOMOL CAME AS SURPRISE TO GOM, ALTHOUGH BARTLETT HAD RECEIVED PRIOR HINTS THAT SOVIETS MIGHT MOVE ON THIS ISSUE. INTERPRETIVE SOVIET STATEMENT ACCOMPANYING SIGNATURE OBVIOUSLY NOT TO GOM'S LIKING BUT ACCEPTED AS NECESSARY PRICE FOR COMMITTING USSR TO TREATY. BARTLETT SAID THAT FIVE COPIES OF SIGNED TREATY--INCLUDING INTERPRETIVE SOVIET STATEMENT--IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES HAD BEEN FLOWN SEPARATELY BACK TO MEXICO CITY AND WOULD BE FORMALLY PRESENTED TO UN WITH COPIES CIRCULATED TO TREATY MEMBERS.

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6. REGARDING SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD CUBAN SIGNATURE, BART-

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LETT SAID THIS HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED DIRECTLY IN CONVER-

SATIONS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS, BUT HE NOTED THAT MEXICO HAD PROPOSED AND OBTAINED USSR'S AGREEMENT TO JOINT COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE WHICH CALLS UPON THOSE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA WHICH HAVE NOT ADHERED TO THE TREATY TO DO SO. IN RETURN, MEXICO HAD ACCEPTED SOVIET LANGUAGE CALLING UPON ALL NUCLEAR POWERS TO STRICTLY OBSERVE THE STATUS OF DENUCLEARIZED ZONE OF LATIN AMERICA AND TO FULLY GUARANTEE THE DENUCLEARIZED REGIME ESTABLISHED BY THE TREATY.

7. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION AS TO WHAT WOULD AFFECT CUBAN DECISION RE TREATY SIGNATURE, BARTLETT FIRST NOTED CUBAN AMBASSADOR'S MAY 21 STATEMENT IN MEXICO CITY LINKING CUBAN POSITION TO QUESTION OF GUANTANAMO AND BY IMPLICATION RELATIONS WITH U.S. IN GENERAL. NEVERTHELESS, HE INDICATED THAT SOVIET SIGNATURE WILL CLEARLY PUT SPOTLIGHT AND PRESSURE ON CUBA, AND HE SEEMED HOPEFUL THAT IN TIME CASTRO WOULD AGREE TO SIGN. FRENCH ADHERENCE WOULD EXERT ADDITIONAL

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TIONAL PRESSURE. AFTER ALL, HE COMMENTED, SOVIET SIGNATURE WILL EFFECTIVELY ENSURE DENUCLEARIZATION OF CUBA.

8. CONCERNING COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH USSR, BARTLETT INDICATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD OFFER ANY PROSPECT FOR A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN SMALL AMOUNT OF EXISTING TRADE. HE CONFIRMED THAT NO AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED REGARDING AN OIL SWAP INVOLVING SPAIN AND CUBA, ALTHOUGH HE SAID THAT THE MATTER HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AND WILL BE LEFT TO "TECHNICIANS" TO TRY AND RESOLVE. EVASIVE RE EVENTUAL PROSPECTS FOR SUCH AN AGREEMENT, HE REITERATED THAT THIS WOULD DEPEND ON TECHNICAL, NOT POLITICAL, CONSIDERATIONS.

9. BARTLETT CONFIRMED THAT NEGOTIATIONS OVER LANGUAGE IN JOINT COMMUNIQUE WERE PROTRACTED AND TIRING, WITH SOVIETS ATTEMPTING TO INSERT LANGUAGE REGARDING A BROAD RANGE OF WORLD ISSUES AND IN SO DOING TO MAKE THE COMMUNIQUE INTERMINABLE. MEXICO CORDIALLY BUT FIRMLY RESISTED INCLUSION OF MATTERS WITH WHICH MEXICO DID NOT HAVE ANY DIRECT INTEREST. AT THE SAME TIME, HE FELT THAT THE GOM HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING SOVIET AGREEMENT TO EXTENSIVE LANGUAGE ON DISARMAMENT AND THE TENOR OF UN RESOLUTIONS REFLECTING DEVELOPING-WORLD POSITIONS.

10. IN DISCUSSION OF NEW ECONOMIC ORDER, SOVIETS WORKED ON UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE THAT UNLIKE WESTERN COUNTRIES USSR HAD NEVER BEEN COLONIAL OR EXPLOITING POWER AND THEREFORE DID NOT HAVE OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE COMPENSATING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO CLEAR ITS CONSCIENCE. MEXICANS IN CONTRAST ATTEMPTED TO CONVINCE USSR THAT WORLD PROBLEMS OVERSHADOW

IDEOLOGY AND THAT ALL NATIONS IN COMMON HUMANITY HAVE
RESPONSIBILITY TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT.
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11. BARTLETT SAID THAT VISIT TO BAKU WAS VERY INTERESTING
AND IMPRESSIVE TO GOM DELEGATION. HUGE NETWORK OF GAS
PIPELINES AND SOPHISTICATED SOVIET TECHNOLOGY FOR GAS
RECUPERATION WERE SPECIFICALLY CITED, AND HE SAID MEXICANS
WERE IMPRESSED BY PRACTICAL SOVIET APPROACH TO COMMERCIAL-
IZATION AND EXPORT OF ITS ENERGY RESOURCES IRRESPECTIVE
OF IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

12. ASKED ABOUT SOVIET-CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA, BARTLETT SAID
IT DID NOT COME UP IN FORMAL DISCUSSIONS (WHICH HE SAID
WERE CONDUCTED IN GREAT FORMALITY) BUT HE COULD NOT SAY
WHETHER IT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED ON SIDE WITH BREZHNEV OR
GROMYKO. (WE TOLD HIM SECRETARY ROEL HAD TOLD AMBASSADOR
THE SUBJECT DID NOT ARISE.) BARTLETT SAID PERSONALLY HE
THOUGHT CUBANS ARE MAKING A MISTAKE BY MIXING IN AFRICA,
AND HE REGRETTED BIG POWER PLAYING AROUND IN AFRICA--
FRENCH, BELGIAN, BRITISH, SOVIET OR U.S. BARTLETT HAD
IMPRESSION THAT SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS--PARTICULARLY IN THE
AREA OF DISARMAMENT--WERE ON THE VERGE OF SUBSTANTIAL
IMPROVEMENT UNTIL AFRICA PROBLEM WHICH REGRETTABLY HAD
COOLED THINGS OFF.

13. BULGARIA--BARTLETT SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO
BULGARIA INCLUDED VERY LITTLE POLITICAL CONTENT AND WAS
BASICALLY FOCUSED ON MEXICAN INTEREST IN BULGARIA'S ACCOM-
PLISHMENT IN THE AREA OF AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY AND OR-
GANIZATION. ASKED WHY BULGARIA HAD BEEN SELECTED FOR THE
VISIT, BARTLETT REPLIED THAT IT WAS A COMBINATION OF
SEVERAL FACTORS, INCLUDING (A) THE NEED FOR JLP TO VISIT
SOME OTHER COUNTRY, AND THE FEELING THAT CHOOSING BULGARIA,
WHICH IS VERY CLOSE TO THE USSR, WAS THE LEAST LIKELY TO
RUFFLE FEELINGS AMONG OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE SOCIALIST
CAMP WHICH HAD BEEN VYING WITH EACH OTHER TO HAVE JLP
VISIT; (B) MRS. LOPEZ PORTILLO'S EARLIER VISIT TO BULGARIA
AND FRIENDSHIP WITH CULTURE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN LYUDMILA
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ZHIVKOVA; AND (C) RECOMMENDATIONS BY SEVERAL OF JLP'S ADVISERS THAT BULGARIA'S EXPERIENCE IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR COULD BE USEFUL TO MEXICO IN ITS SEARCH FOR NEW WAYS OF ORGANIZING ITS AGRICULTURAL SECTOR TO RAISE PRODUCTION. ACCORDING TO BARTLETT, THERE WERE NO SUBSTANTIVE POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE BULGARIANS, ALTHOUGH IN CONTRAST TO SOME COMMENTS HE PERSONALLY FELT THAT THE PROTOCOLARY ATMOSPHERE DURING THE BULGARIAN VISIT WAS JUST AS FORMAL AS THAT WHICH PREVAILED DURING THE MOSCOW PORTION OF THE SOVIET TRIP.

14. COMMENT: VIEWED FROM THE MEXICAN PERSPECTIVE, JLP'S TRIP TO USSR/BULGARIA WAS WELL ORGANIZED, DESIGNED TO PROJECT CAREFUL IDEOLOGICAL BALANCE IN GOM FOREIGN POLICY, AND GENERALLY WELL RECEIVED ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. MEXICO ACHIEVED ITS PRINCIPAL FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVE OF OBTAINING SOVIET ADHERENCE TO PROTOCOL II OF TLAHELCO TREATY, APPARENTLY WITHOUT MAKING ANY COMMITMENTS OR
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CONCESSIONS IN OTHER AREAS WHICH WOULD HAVE CREATED CONCERN AMONG THE PRESIDENT'S MORE CONSERVATIVE DOMESTIC CONSTITUENTS. INDEED, WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME SLIGHT INCREASE

IN SCIENCE, CULTURAL OR TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGES WITH THE USSR, AND PERHAPS BULGARIA, AGREEMENTS REACHED SO FAR DO NOT APPEAR VERY SIGNIFICANT OR SEEM TO SIGNIFY ANY NOTABLE CHANGE IN MEXICO'S RELATIONS--PARTICULARLY WITH THE USSR. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SOME SLIGHT CARPING ABOUT THE COST AND SIZE OF THE PRESIDENT'S TRAVELING PARTY, PRESS COMMENTARY WAS ALMOST UNIFORMLY FAVORABLE.

15. FROM A DOMESTIC POLITICAL STANDPOINT, THE VISIT HAS APPARENTLY HELPED PLEASE THE MEXICAN LEFT, DEFUSE CRITICISM THAT JLP'S ADMINISTRATION HAD DRIFTED TOO FAR RIGHT, AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE GOM'S EFFORTS VIA POLITICAL REFORM TO ENCOURAGE DISSIDENT MEXICAN GROUPS TO ACT WITHIN THE ESTABLISHED POLITICAL SYSTEM. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE THAT JLP HAS PROBABLY ENHANCED HIS DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AS A SERIOUS, PRAGMATIC AND EFFECTIVE STATESMAN WHO IS ADROIT AT MAINTAINING THE KIND OF CAREFUL POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL BALANCE WHICH IS BEST CALCULATED TO FURTHER MEXICAN NATIONAL INTERESTS AT HOME AND ABROAD. LUCEY

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